

WHAT TO EXPECT

The 60 mile long Upper Colorado River corridor provides for a large number and variety of recreational opportunities. Unlike the more famous sections of the Colorado River known for big waves and isolation, the Upper Colorado gains popularity from its combination of easy access, variety of scenery and wildlife, whitewater and opportunities for learning boating skills, fishing, swimming or just relaxing.

This portion of the river is paralleled by graveled county roads and a railroad. Most of the private land is in agricultural production and very few developments exist on public land. Thus, even though evidences of man exist, the river corridor remains primarily natural.

Peak use occurs during weekend mornings when most boaters are preparing to depart. To avoid crowded put-in points, it is suggested you select later starting times or infrequently used river access points. Selecting a later starting time will assist in finding lunch sites and avoiding the more congested time periods on the river.

Most of the river traffic is single day trips so campsites are not difficult to find. Approximately 80% of the visitors use the river segment between the Pumphouse and State Bridge. Visitors seeking to avoid the crowds should consider floating below State Bridge.

SETTLEMENT OF THE UPPER COLORADO RIVER REGION

Much of Colorado's western slope remained undeveloped and occupied by the Ute Indians until the late 1800's. The discovery of silver near Leadville and westward extension of the railroads attracted large numbers of fortune hunters to the area.

The fertile low land along the Colorado River, then called the Grand River, and the tall grass of the parks and mesas above the river, convinced many to stay and begin to homestead and graze sheep and cattle on the abundant rangelands.

In the late 1800's the railroad extended lines west to Steamboat Springs and Wolcott to service the increasing population of northwest Colorado. Freight, mail and passengers were carried between the rail terminals by stagecoach. Some evidence of the stage route that crossed the river on a private ferry near McCoy is still visible. State Highway 131 generally follows the old stage route. In 1908, the railroad line from Steamboat Springs through McCoy was completed and eventually eliminated the need for the stage route.

In 1906, the famous "Moffat Road" railroad was surveyed through Upper Gore Canyon. Surveyors used suspended bridges along the sheer walls to locate the roadbed. The railroad was blasted out from the canyon's granite walls. Huts at the Pumphouse end of the canyon that housed the men who built the railroad are still visible. The Moffat Road was taken over in 1947 by the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad which still uses this historic route.

One of the last major pieces of railroad construction in the United States was the Dotsero Cutoff, completed in 1934. This spur follows the river between Bond and Dotsero and provides a more direct route for passenger and freight traffic between Denver and points west.

The historic character of settlement in the Upper Colorado River region remains evident even today, almost 100 years since the first homesteaders arrived. Many of the ranches visible from the river are operated by direct descendants of those first homesteaders who struggled against the severe winters and periodic flooding. The historic log cabins seen along the river are typical of the places the pioneers lived at the turn of the century.

Railroad crews often seen maintaining track along the river are evidence of the importance of the railroad to the settlement of the area. The railroad remains an important route for northwestern Colorado and still moves freight, coal and passengers through the river corridor.

GEOLOGY

Scenic views around along the Upper Colorado River as the river cuts through a variety of geologic formations. The varied nature of landforms range from steep walled canyons of shale, sandstone and basalt to wide river valleys surrounded by gypsum and limestone. Weather and erosion have helped in the formation and breakdown of these landforms. Seen in the distance from the river, the Gore Range, Yarmory Mountain, and Flat Tops were formed by lava flows, 1,000 feet thick, over 30 million years ago.

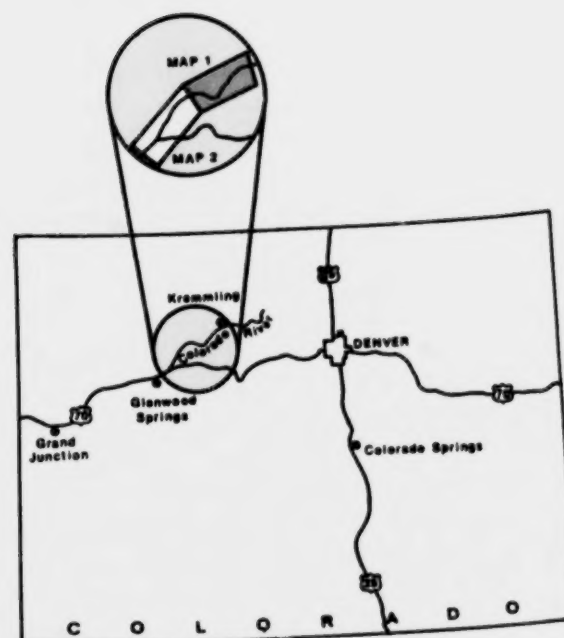
The mineral composition of the surrounding soil causes the varied color of the river following heavy rains. Near Cataract Bridge, the water turns milky white because of the high silica content and downstream the river turns red from the harden silt.

WILDLIFE AND FISH

This section of the Colorado River contains a variety of landscapes with abundant wildlife. In the canyons, golden eagles, turkey vultures and red tailed hawks soar. Beside the river there is an occasional Canadian Goose, Red Headed Merganser, Mallard, Great Blue Heron, and Cliff Swallow diving at the waters surface. There are mule deer in the area, but are seldom seen by rafters.

Game fish in the Upper Colorado River include rainbow, brown, cutthroat and brook trout, and mountain whitefish. Other fish include carp and sucker. A Colorado fishing license is required. Please refer to the fishing regulations available through any license selling agent or the Colorado Division of Wildlife.

LOCATION



FURTHER INFORMATION

Bureau of Land Management

KREMMLING
RESOURCE AREA
P.O. Box 68
Kremmling, CO 80459
303-724-3438

GLENWOOD SPRINGS
RESOURCE AREA
P.O. Box 1009
Glenwood Springs, CO 81602
303-945-2341

Emergencies

GRAND COUNTY SHERIFF
Hot Sulphur Springs, CO
303-725-3344

EAGLE COUNTY SHERIFF
EAGLE, CO
303-328-6111

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1982-580-429

POINTS OF INTEREST

0-0 MILES. Mileages start where Colorado Highway 9 crosses the Colorado River south of Kremmling.
5-8 MILES. Big Gore Canyon. Floatboating is not advised.
11-1 MILES. Pumphouse Recreation Area. B-L-M. river access site with boat ramp, parking, drinking water, toilets, hiking trail, camping, picnicking and river ranger station.
12-6 MILES. Little Gore Canyon.
12-9 MILES. Hazard. Tunnel on the left (south) bank of the river. Keep to the right.
13-1 MILES. Needle Eye Rapid (Class II).
13-5 MILES. Grand River Cabins. These cabins were part of an irrigation project built in the 1920's by the Argentine Ditch Company to pipe water to the above plateau.
14-8 MILES. Sheephorn. B-L-M. river access site with boat ramp. No parking except to load and unload. Camping available at the down site .5 mile to the southeast.

15-2 MILES. Radium. Hazardous bridge abutment in the river. No services available except emergency telephone.
16-8 MILES. Red Eye Rapid (Class I).
17-1 MILES. Yarmory Rapid (Class II) and Red Gorge.
17-6 MILES. The Island Site. Primitive camping.
18-4 MILES. The Bench Site. Primitive camping.
18-6 MILES. Lone Pine Site. Primitive camping.
21-3 MILES. Rancho Del Rio. Private resort with boat ramp, parking, camping, grocery store and telephone.
21-8 MILES. Yarmory Bridge. B-L-M. river access site.
23-4 MILES. Cable Rapid (Class I).
23-8 MILES. Cable Rapid Cabins. The origin of these cabins is unknown, but they may have been part of a mining or ferry operation. The cable stanchions for the ferry can still be seen on both banks of the river.
25-2 MILES. State Bridge. Private boat ramp and parking. The bridge was a major crossing of the Colorado River providing the only direct access to northwest Colorado for many years. In 1931, the state legislature appropriated money to build a bridge across the river to replace the ferry crossing. Thus the name State Bridge. The bridge was completed in 1932, rebuilt in 1935, and again rebuilt in 1937. The second bridge for the highway was completed in 1968.

25-8 MILES. State Bridge Site. B-L-M. river access site with boat ramp and primitive camping. No vehicle access.
26-7 MILES. Double Pine Site. Primitive camping.
27-1 MILES. Sagebrush Flat Site. Primitive camping.
28-0 MILES. Bond. Restaurant, gas station, post office and telephone.
31-5 MILES. McCoy Watermill. Built in 1922 by Earle Brooks to lift water high enough to irrigate his homestead. Recently local groups have restored the watermill. The largest in the state, and it has been listed in the National Register of Historic Places.
36-0 MILES. Cottonwood Bend Campsite. Primitive camping.
37-8 MILES. Juniper Glen Campsite. Primitive camping.
39-3 MILES. Cataract Bridge. B-L-M. river access site with boat ramp, camping, fishing and toilet facilities.

LEGEND

PUBLIC LAND (B-L-M. ADMINISTERED)
NATIONAL FOREST LAND
STATE LAND
DIVISION OF WILDLIFE LAND
PRIVATE LAND
PUBLIC RIVER ACCESS SITE
RIVER MILEAGES

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Primary highway
hard surface
Secondary highway
hard surface
Interstate Route
Light duty road, hard or
unimproved surface
Unimproved road
U.S. Route
State Route

SCALE

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50

RIVER ETHICS

The safe and proper use of the river environment will help to protect the sport of whitewater boating from over regulation and provide for more enjoyable recreation opportunities. Your assistance is needed in following a few common rules of courtesy.

TRASH - Pack out what you pack in! Keep trash bags handy for cans, papers, cigarette butts and other incidental litter. Never sink cans or bottles in the river.

RIVER TRAVEL - Give other boaters and river users plenty of room. When overtaking another boat, pass quickly and efficiently, especially near hazards and rapids. People fishing enjoy their solitude, pass quietly at a distance.

CAMPING - Avoid heavily used sites or camping too close to other groups. Be considerate to fellow campers by refraining from disruptive activities.

FIRES - The use of gas stoves, fire pans or existing fire rings is encouraged. Burn only dead and down wood and completely extinguish all fires when leaving. Cans, bottles and tin foil do not burn - please carry them out.

PRIVATE LAND - Never cross or use private land without permission of the owner. Avoid crossing or lingering on roads, railroads and bridges. Because of the amount of private land and presence of the roads and railroad within the river corridor, the failure to respect them will endanger your safety and the future of boating opportunities.

SANITATION - All human waste and soap should be properly disposed of to prevent polluting the river and shoreline. Please use the toilet facilities where they are provided. If a facility is not provided, a latrine for human waste and soap disposal should be dug in organic soil well away from the river and drainages.

The Upper Colorado River

Kremmling to Shoshone



River of Changing Landscapes



Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

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SAFETY

FAR TOO MANY WHITewater BOATING ACCIDENTS OR FATALITIES RESULT FROM NOT FOLLOWING BASIC RULES OF SAFETY. ACCIDENTS CREATE A BAD NAME FOR THE SPORT, RESULTING IN INCREASED REGULATION OF YOUR RECREATIONAL PASTIMES. KNOWLEDGE OF THE RIVER'S WHITewater, HAZARDS, AND OF YOUR EQUIPMENT AND ITS PROPER USE, WILL ENSURE BOTH A SAFE AND ENJOYABLE TRIP.

PERSONAL FLOATATION DEVICES - COLORADO LAW REQUIRES A LIFE JACKET BE WORN AT ALL TIMES WHILE ON THE WATER. SELECT A JACKET THAT IS IN GOOD CONDITION, FITS PROPERLY AND COMFORTABLY, AND WEAR IT TO STAY ALIVE. A VEST-TYPE JACKET IS RECOMMENDED.

REQUIRED EQUIPMENT - REQUIRED EQUIPMENT FOR FLOATING RIVERS IN COLORADO IS A MINIMUM OF ONE APPROVED LIFE JACKET PER PERSON, ONE SPARE LIFE JACKET PER CRAFT (AN ADDITIONAL SPARE JACKET IS REQUIRED FOR EACH 10 PEOPLE ON A MULTIPLE BOAT TRIP), ONE SPARE OAR/PADDLE PER CRAFT, FIRST AID KIT, AND REPAIR KIT WITH PUMP (FOR RAFTS). OTHER SUGGESTED EQUIPMENT FOR SAFE FLOATBOATING IS A BOW LINE (RAFTS AND CANOES), RAIL BUCKET, THROW LINE, CHANGE OF CLOTHES, AND MATCHES.

HAZARDS

BRIDGE ABUTMENTS - MANY OF THE RAILROAD AND ROAD CROSSINGS ARE ACCOMPANIED BY DANGEROUS BRIDGE SUPPORTS PRESENTING THE RISK OF BEING PINNED TO AN ABUTMENT BY SWIFT CURRENT. THESE ABUTMENTS SHOULD BE SCOUTED FOR SAFE PASSAGE BEFORE PROCEEDING, ESPECIALLY AT HIGH WATER FLOW PERIODS.

HITTING A ROCK OR BRIDGE ABUTMENT BOB FIRST WILL STOP A RAFT MOMENTARILY, AND ALLOW IT TO SPIN OFF EITHER WAY WITH A FEW STROKES. IF THE RAFT IS GOING TO HIT BROADSIDE, THE ENTIRE CREW SHOULD IMMEDIATELY JUMP TO THE SIDE OF THE RAFT NEAREST THE OBSTACLE. THIS ALLOWS THE UPSTREAM SIDE OF THE RAFT TO RISE AND THE WATER TO FLOW BENEATH IT, PREVENTING THE RAFT FROM FLIPPING.

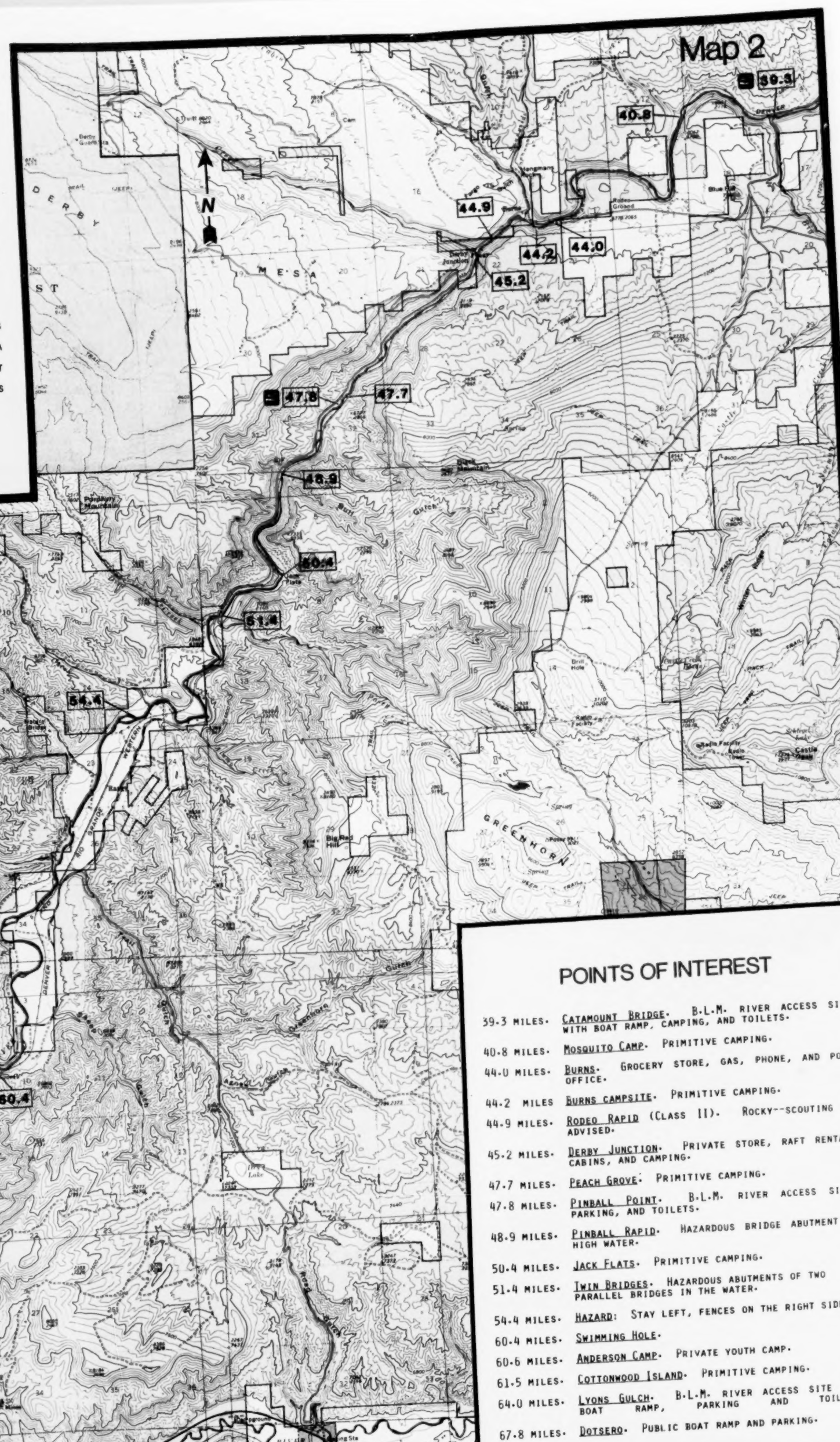
HYPOTHERMIA - ANYTIME COLD WATER COMBINES WITH CHILLING WEATHER CONDITIONS TO LOWER CORE BODY TEMPERATURE, HYPOTHERMIA IS A RISK. SYMPTOMS INCLUDE UNCONTROLLED SHIVERING, WEAKNESS, LACK OF COORDINATION, AND BLUE SKIN. TREATMENT SHOULD BE ADMINISTERED QUICKLY AFTER SYMPTOMS APPEAR. REMOVE WET CLOTHES, WARM THE VICTIM WITH DRY CLOTHES, WARM LIQUIDS, CAMPFIRE HEAT, OR SKIN-TO-SKIN CONTACT.

PERSON OVERBOARD - IF YOU FIND YOURSELF BEING SWEEP OVERBOARD, SHOUT TO ALERT YOUR COMPANIONS. IF THE BOAT FLIPS OVER, HOLD ON TO THE UPSTREAM SIDE OR GET ABOVE IT SO YOU WILL NOT BE HIT OR PINNED AGAINST ROCKS. WHEN FLOATING THROUGH ROCKY RAPIDS, SWIM ON YOUR BACK, FACING DOWNSTREAM WITH YOUR FEET UP IN FRONT OF YOU AND KNEES BENT TO ABSORB SHOCK AND TO PUSH AWAY FROM ROCKS. FLOAT WITH THE CURRENT AND MOVE TOWARD SHORE AFTER DANGER HAS PASSED. DON'T JUMP IN AFTER SOMEONE UNLESS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY. KEEP TRACK OF YOUR COMPANIONS, IF SOMEONE IS MISSING REMEMBER TO CHECK BENEATH THE RAFT.

FLASH FLOODS - DURING THE SUMMER MONTHS, AFTERNOON THUNDERSTORMS THAT CAUSE FLASH FLOODS IN SIDE CANYONS ARE COMMON. SELECT CAMP SITES OR STOPPING AREAS ON HIGH GROUND, WELL AWAY FROM SIDE CANYONS.

PREPAREDNESS - A SUCCESSFUL RAFT TRIP DEPENDS ON HAVING THE RIGHT EQUIPMENT, IN GOOD CONDITION, AND BEING PREPARED FOR CHANGING RIVER AND WEATHER CONDITIONS. FLOATBOATERS SHOULD NOT ATTEMPT TRIPS BEYOND THEIR SKILLS OR PREPARATION; THIS MAY RESULT IN AN UNPLEASANT OR HARMFUL RIVER EXPERIENCE. ALWAYS BE PREPARED FOR THE UNEXPECTED ON RIVER TRIPS.

DRINKING WATER - RIVER WATER IS NOT SAFE TO DRINK UNLESS BOILED OR CHEMICALLY TREATED. UNTREATED WATER MAY CONTAIN A MICROSCOPIC ORGANISM "GIARDIA LAMBLIA" OR BACTERIA THAT CAUSE SEVERE INTESTINAL DISORDERS. DRINKING WATER IS AVAILABLE AT THE PUMPHOUSE RECREATION AREA.



POINTS OF INTEREST

- 50.3 MILES. CATAMOUNT BRIDGE. B-L-M. RIVER ACCESS SITE WITH BOAT RAMP, CAMPING, AND TOILETS.
- 40.8 MILES. MOSQUITO CAMP. PRIMITIVE CAMPING.
- 44.0 MILES. BURNS. GROCERY STORE, GAS, PHONE, AND POST OFFICE.
- 44.2 MILES. BURNS CAMPSITE. PRIMITIVE CAMPING.
- 44.9 MILES. RODEO RAPID (CLASS II). ROCKY--SCOUTING IS ADVISED.
- 45.2 MILES. DERRY JUNCTION. PRIVATE STORE, RAFT RENTAL, CABINS, AND CAMPING.
- 47.7 MILES. PEACH GROVE. PRIMITIVE CAMPING.
- 47.8 MILES. PINBALL POINT. B-L-M. RIVER ACCESS SITE, PARKING, AND TOILETS.
- 48.9 MILES. PINBALL RAPID. HAZARDOUS BRIDGE ABUTMENT AT HIGH WATER.
- 50.4 MILES. JACK FLATS. PRIMITIVE CAMPING.
- 51.4 MILES. TWIN BRIDGES. HAZARDOUS ABUTMENTS OF TWO PARALLEL BRIDGES IN THE WATER.
- 54.4 MILES. HAZARD: STAY LEFT, FENCES ON THE RIGHT SIDE.
- 60.4 MILES. SWIMMING HOLE.
- 60.6 MILES. ANDERSON CAMP. PRIVATE YOUTH CAMP.
- 61.5 MILES. COTTONWOOD ISLAND. PRIMITIVE CAMPING.
- 64.0 MILES. LYONS GULCH. B-L-M. RIVER ACCESS SITE WITH BOAT RAMP, PARKING AND TOILETS.
- 67.8 MILES. DOTSERO. PUBLIC BOAT RAMP AND PARKING.

CANOES AND SMALL CRAFTS

THE UPPER COLORADO RIVER PROVIDES OPPORTUNITIES FOR CANDOERS AT ALL EXPERIENCE LEVELS. THE RIVER SEGMENTS BETWEEN THE PUMPHOUSE TO STATE BRIDGE AND CATAMOUNT TO TWIN BRIDGES ARE SUGGESTED FOR EXPERIENCED WHITewater CANDOERS WITH EQUIPMENT AND SKILL SUITABLE FOR ROCKY RAPIDS. THE RIVER BETWEEN STATE BRIDGE AND CATAMOUNT BRIDGE IS WELL SUITED FOR CANDOERS WHO WISH TO INCREASE WHITewater CANOEING SKILLS PRIOR TO TAKING A TRIP ON A MORE DIFFICULT RIVER SEGMENT. THE WATER BETWEEN TWIN BRIDGES AND DOTSERO PROVIDES AN OPPORTUNITY FOR INEXPERIENCED CANDOERS TO LEARN AND PRACTICE THE SKILLS NECESSARY FOR SAFE WHITewater CANOEING. ALL CANDOERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO SCOUT AND/OR PORTAGE WATER BEYOND THEIR ABILITY LEVEL. TUBING IS NOT ADVISED ON THE UPPER COLORADO RIVER.



SUGGESTED TRIPS

THE UPPER COLORADO RIVER PROVIDES OPPORTUNITIES FOR A VARIETY OF RIVER TRIPS. FACTORS FOR CHOOSING A PARTICULAR RIVER SEGMENT INCLUDE THE DESIRED LENGTH OF TRIP, DEGREE OF NATURALNESS, CAMPING OR LUNCH SITES AND NUMBER OF ENCOUNTERS WITH OTHER GROUPS.

THE AMOUNT OF PUBLIC LAND ADJACENT TO THE RIVER VARIES WITH THE NUMBER OF PRIVATE RANCHES AND FARMS LOCATED ON THE RELATIVELY BROAD VALLEY AREAS. OF THE 13 RIVER ACCESS SITES DEVELOPED BETWEEN PUMPHOUSE AND DOTSERO, 5 ARE PUBLIC AND 8 ARE PRIVATELY OPERATED. THIRTY-FOUR OF THE 43 SITES SUITABLE FOR LUNCH OR OVERNIGHT STOPS ARE ON PUBLIC LAND.

BESIDES FLOATBOATING, VISITORS MAY INCLUDE OTHER ACTIVITIES ON THEIR RIVER TRIP TO PROVIDE FOR A DIVERSE RIVER EXPERIENCE AND TO REDUCE RIVER TRAFFIC. OPPORTUNITIES INCLUDE HIKES UP SIDE CANYONS, FISHING, AND WARM-UP STOPS AT POINTS OF INTEREST.

FOUR RIVER SEGMENTS ARE DESCRIBED BELOW. EACH SEGMENT CAN BE FLOATED IN ONE DAY OR COMBINED FOR OVERNIGHT TRIPS.

Pumphouse to State Bridge (Map 1)

MOST OF THE 14 MILES OF THE UPSTREAM SEGMENT OF THE UPPER COLORADO RIVER ARE ON PUBLIC LAND, AND CONTAIN THE HEAVIEST USED FLOATBOATING AREAS. THE SCENIC VIEWS UPSTREAM TO GORE CANYON, AND DOWNSTREAM TO LITTLE GORE CANYON, RED GORGE, AND YAMONY MOUNTAIN COMPLEMENT THE PERIODIC RAPIDS AND ATTRACTIVE STOPS OF THIS RIVER SEGMENT. TEN CAMPING/PICNICKING SITES ARE ON PUBLIC LAND.

THE GRAND RIVER CABINS AND THE HOT SPRING DAY-USE SITE IN LITTLE GORE CANYON, THE ISLAND AND BENCH CAMPSITES BELOW RED GORGE, AND CABLE RAPID CABINS BELOW YAMONY MOUNTAIN ARE SOME OF THE MOST HEAVILY USED CAMPING/PICNICKING SITES.

THE PUMPHOUSE TO STATE BRIDGE RIVER SEGMENT IS USED MAINLY AS A ONE-DAY RIVER TRIP, ALTHOUGH OVERNIGHT CAMPING ON A TWO-DAY TRIP IS ALSO POPULAR. RIVER ACCESS AT THE PUMPHOUSE BECOMES CONGESTED ON MOST SUMMER WEEKENDS. VISITORS MAY WISH TO CONSIDER ALTERNATE SITES DURING THIS TIME.

State Bridge to Catamount Bridge (Map 1)

THIS 16-MILE RIVER STRETCH IS CHARACTERIZED BY A RELATIVELY BROAD RIVER CORRIDOR WITH FEW RAPIDS. PUBLIC LAND PROVIDES ACCESS AND FACILITIES AT BOTH ENDS OF THE RIVER SEGMENT AND SIX PUBLIC CAMPING/PICNICKING SITES ARE AVAILABLE.

VISITORS TO THIS SEGMENT CAN EXPECT TO ENCOUNTER FAR FEWER RIVER GROUPS THAN ON THE PUMPHOUSE TO STATE BRIDGE SEGMENT. VIEWS OF THE WHITE RIVER PLATEAU, CASTLE PEAK, AND THE WATERWHEEL NEAR MCGOY PROVIDE INTERESTING SCENERY. THIS STRETCH IS A GOOD DAY TRIP. HIGH WATER OR THE DESIRE FOR AN OVERNIGHT TRIP ALLOWS FLOATBOATING FROM FARTHER UPSTREAM OR INTO THE RIVER SEGMENT PAST CATAMOUNT BRIDGE. THE STATE BRIDGE BLM SITE IS ACCESSIBLE BY FOOT OR BOAT ONLY.

Catamount Bridge to Twin Bridges (Map 2)

THIS RIVER SEGMENT IS MOSTLY THROUGH PUBLIC LAND AND PROVIDES A CONTRAST OF SURROUNDING RIVER ENVIRONMENTS. THE FIRST 5 MILES TRAVEL THROUGH A SCENIC CANYON PARALLELED ONLY BY THE RAILROAD. SEVERAL MODERATE RAPIDS, WATERFALLS, AND SCENIC VISTAS ARE THE MAIN ATTRACTIONS OF THE SEGMENT.

BELOW BURNS THE RIVER IS PARALLELED BY COUNTY ROAD 301, AND THE ATTRACTIONS OF RODEO RAPID, PINBALL RAPID, AND PERIODIC CAMPING/PICNICKING SITES ADD TO THE DIVERSITY OF FLOATBOATING. THIS RIVER SEGMENT IS THE SECOND MOST POPULAR SEGMENT OF THE RIVER, AND ALMOST ALL USE IS ONE DAY TRIPS.

MANY LOCATIONS FOR OVERNIGHT CAMPING ARE AVAILABLE, WITH PUBLIC FACILITIES AT CATAMOUNT BRIDGE AND PINBALL ACCESS. PRIVATE FACILITIES ARE AVAILABLE AT BURNS AND DERRY JUNCTION.

Twin Bridges to Shoshone (Map 2)

THIS LEAST-USED SEGMENT OF THE UPPER COLORADO RIVER OFFERS VISITORS THE OPPORTUNITY FOR THE FEWEST ENCOUNTERS WITH OTHER RIVER GROUPS ALONG ITS 23 MILE LENGTH. ATTRACTIONS SUCH AS SCATTERED RAPIDS, FAST WATER, AND SCENIC VIEWS OF THE FLAT TOPS TO THE WEST ARE PRESENT. PUBLIC FACILITIES AND BOAT LAUNCHES ARE AVAILABLE AT LYONS GULCH AND DOTSERO.

CANOEING IS A POPULAR ONE-DAY ACTIVITY, THOUGH RAFTING AND KAYAKING ARE JUST AS ENJOYABLE. SEVEN CAMPING/PICNICKING SITES ARE LOCATED ON PUBLIC LAND. RIVER ACCESS IS LIMITED PAST THE DOTSERO BOAT LAUNCH.



RIVER CHARACTERISTICS

READING THE RIVER - THE KEY TO A SAFE AND ENJOYABLE RIVER TRIP IS KNOWING HOW TO READ THE RIVER--TO SPOT HAZARDS AND SELECT THE BEST RUN THROUGH RAPIDS. KNOW THE SECTION OF THE RIVER YOU ARE GOING TO RUN, SCOUT RAPIDS AND PORTAGE WHEN THEY ARE BEYOND THE ABILITY OF YOUR EQUIPMENT OR CREW.

WATER HYDRAULICS - THE APPEARANCE OF WHITewater VARIES ACCORDING TO THE SPEED OF THE CURRENT AND THE SIZE, SHAPE, AND DEPTH OF ROCKS BELOW THE SURFACE. AS WATER DEPTH CHANGES, THE CHARACTERISTICS OF WAVES CHANGE DRAMATICALLY.

THE TONGUE - A "V" SHAPED FLOW OF SMOOTH WATER LEADING INTO A RAPID USUALLY INDICATES THE PATH OF THE MAIN CURRENT AND THE BEST POINT OF ENTRY FOR BOATS.

HOLE - FAST WATER FALLING OVER A BOULDER OR LEDGE PLUNGES TO THE RIVER BOTTOM BEFORE TURNING DOWNSTREAM. THE PLACE WHERE THE FAST CURRENT SWINGS UPWARD AND REVOLVES BACK ON ITSELF, FORMING A TREACHEROUS MEETING OF THE CURRENTS, IS CALLED A REVERSAL OR "HOLE". REVERSALS CAN FLIP BOATS OR TRAP SWIMMERS.

IF YOU FIND YOURSELF IN A HOLE, TAKE A LUNGFUL OF AIR AND RELAX. YOU WILL MOST LIKELY BE SUCKED UNDER, TUMBLED AROUND, AND WASHED OUT. YOUR LIFEJACKET WILL BRING YOU TO THE SURFACE. IF TRAPPED, SWIM TO THE SIDE OF THE HOLE TO REACH THE SWIFT DOWNSTREAM CURRENT.

INTERNATIONAL WHITewater SCALE

THE INTERNATIONAL WHITewater SCALE, SUMMARIZED BELOW, IS ONE METHOD USED FOR RATING THE DIFFICULTY OF RAPIDS. ALL RAPIDS ON THE UPPER COLORADO RIVER HAVE BEEN INFORMALLY RATED AS EITHER CLASS I OR CLASS II. DIFFICULTY WILL INCREASE AT HIGH WATER SO PLEASE EXERCISE CAUTION DURING THE MONTH OF JUNE.

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| CLASS I | VERY EASY - SMALL WAVES, PASSAGES CLEAR, NO SERIOUS OBSTACLES, LITTLE MANEUVERING. |
| CLASS II | EASY - MEDIUM REGULAR WAVES, PASSAGES CLEAR, SOME MANEUVERING REQUIRED. |
| CLASS III | MEDIUM - NUMEROUS WAVES HIGH AND IRREGULAR, NARROW PASSAGES, SCOUTING USUALLY REQUIRED. |
| CLASS IV | DIFFICULT - POWERFUL IRREGULAR WAVES, LONG RAPIDS WITH BOILING EDDIES AND DANGEROUS ROCKS, SCOUTING MANDATORY, PRECISE MANEUVERING. |
| CLASS V | VERY DIFFICULT - VIOLENT RAPIDS FOLLOWING EACH OTHER WITHOUT INTERRUPTION, BIG DROPS AND POWERFUL IRREGULAR WAVES, SCOUTING MANDATORY BUT DIFFICULT, EXPERT MANEUVERING REQUIRED. |
| CLASS VI | EXTREME DANGER - LIMITS OF NAVIGABILITY, SEVERE RISK OF LIFE. |